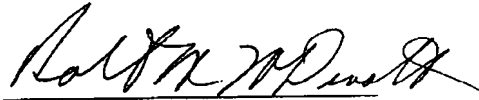


The Examiner has rejected claims 1-7 and 10-24 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over van Ee et al. (USP 6,208,341, hereinafter van Ee) in view of Roth (USP 6,266,060). The van Ee patent was filed on 5 August 1998 and issued on 27 March 2001, during which time this invention was filed, and therefore is available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). Above is a statement of common ownership of the van Ee patent and this application at the time that this invention was made, as required by 35 U.S.C. 103(c) to disqualify the van Ee patent from being used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the present application to be in condition for allowance. If any points remain in issue that may best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert M. McDermott, Esq.

Reg. No. 41,508

804-493-0707

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING OR TRANSMISSION

It is hereby certified that, on the date shown below, this correspondence is being:

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On 8 February 2003

By

